

2. How Do I Install the PC Pricer?

2.1 System Requirements

Prior to attempting to install the PC Pricer, ensure that your PC is compatible with the software. The PC Pricer requires the Windows 95 operating system or a higher version of Windows (e.g. Windows 98, NT, ME, XP, etc.). While earlier versions of some Medicare PC Pricers operated in Windows 3.x or MS-DOS environments, millennium compliance required the software to be converted to Windows 95 compatible operating systems. The PC Pricer program and its associated files require at least 4.7 megabytes of free disk space.

2.2 Downloading from the Internet

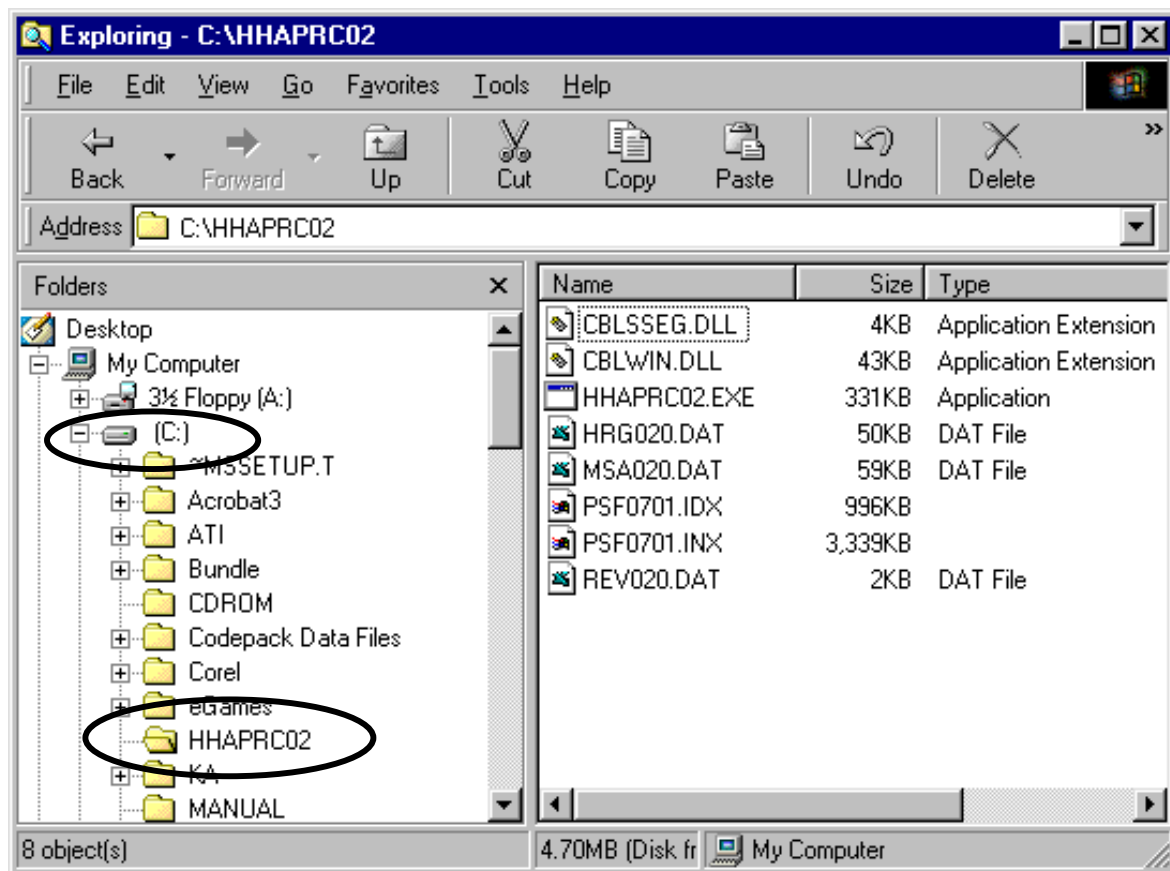
The PC Pricer is available as a free download from the CMS website. Go to the PC Pricer home page at www.hcfa.gov/medicare/nm75ght/pricdnld.htm or follow the PC Pricer link from the home health quick reference guide at www.hcfa.gov/medlearn/refhha.htm. All currently maintained PC Pricers for Medicare PPSs are available from this page. Scroll down the page until you see the heading entitled “Home Health PP Pricer” and click the link for the fiscal year version you wish to download. This will initiate the transfer of a zipped file. On the “File Download” screen that follows, select the “Save this program to disk” option and click okay. Use the “Save As” screen that appears next to choose a drive or folder on which to save the zipped file, then click “Save.” Downloading the zipped file should take less than 2 minutes, though download speed may vary based upon your modem and internet connection.

2.3 Installation Instructions

Locate the downloaded zipped file on your C:\ drive. The filename will be ZIP_HH0~x, with the x being a number corresponding to the fiscal year for the Pricer you have downloaded. For example, the Pricer for fiscal year 2001 will be named ZIP_HH0~1.exe. Double click on this file. This will initiate a series of screens allowing you to save the Pricer files to your hard drive.

IMPORTANT: Accept the default locations suggested on the screens. The PC Pricer must be saved to the C:\ drive only. It must be saved with the default folder name HHAPRCxx, with the xx being two numbers corresponding to the fiscal year for the Pricer. If these default settings are changed, the PC Pricer will not function.

Once the unzipping of the file is complete, Windows Explorer will display the following (although folders other than the HHAPRCxx folder will vary):



2.4 Keeping the software current

Each version of the HH PPS PC Pricer contains software designed to calculate payments for a particular Federal fiscal year. The Federal fiscal year runs from October 1st of one year to September 30th of the next. That means the fiscal year 2001 PC Pricer will calculate RAPs and claims beginning on or after October 1, 2000 and ending on or before

September 30, 2001. To calculate RAPs or claims beyond this date range, the fiscal year 2002 PC Pricer must be downloaded.

What this means for most HHAs is that you will likely want to maintain on at least one PC in your operation the PC Pricers applicable to all RAPs or claims within the full Medicare claims timely filing period. Since the timely filing period extends 15 to 27 months beyond the service dates of a claim, you may want to maintain three PC Pricers at one time. In fiscal year 2003, claims with dates in fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003 will be timely for Medicare filing. When fiscal year 2004 begins, you will want to download the 2004 PC Pricer, but will be able to remove the 2001 version from your PC.

New Pricer versions for a new fiscal year are available for download on or before October 1st of each year. Though HHAs will rarely have reason to update the software more frequently than annually, the software is routinely updated quarterly. Unless mid-year legislative changes affect Medicare payment rates, these interim updates only affect the providers listed in the provider files contained in the download (see Chapter 4 for more information on the provider files).